

# Cedar Mesa / Grand Gulch Trip Planner

## Welcome to Cedar Mesa

**C**edar Mesa is a network of canyons that are home to numerous rock art panels and prehistoric ruins. Excellent exploration opportunities exist for those seeking beautiful scenery and fascinating cultural remnants.

Streams carving into the Cedar Mesa Sandstone, the banded yellow-gray to reddish orange rock you see around you, are the slow-working sculptors creating these canyons. Beach and sand-bar sands, left by a sea invading from the northwest during the Permian Period, around 250 million years ago, formed the sandstone!

Keep a lookout for naturally occurring arches. Water and frost slowly break down the weaker underlayers of sandstone so that a hole appears, gradually growing larger, and eventually forming an arch.

You may notice the very dark streaks on the cliff walls. This is known as desert varnish and is a thin deposit of minerals including iron, manganese, magnetite and windblown clay particles, combined with a thin layer of microscopic bacteria. The clay particles hold water that runs down the cliff faces, enabling the bacteria to survive. The bacteria absorb trace amounts of the minerals, then precipitate it as a dark layer, or streak, on the rock surfaces. The darker the streak, the longer the process has been happening. These streaks also offer clues to where the water will pour off the cliff in a storm, so observe them closely as you set up your camp!

Truly unique about the Cedar Mesa area are the remnants of the past residents. Ancestral Puebloans inhabited the canyons and mesa tops between 700 and 2,000 years ago. Many of their dwellings, farming areas, and rock art sites remain, in excellent condition. Stone and bone tools, pottery pieces, and other artifacts give us hints of the lifestyle of these people. Treat everything you find with care and respect. Please leave all artifacts where you find them!

The canyons and mesas of the area are still important to the modern-day Ute, Navajo, and Pueblo tribes. This area has been home to many, as well as providing a rich source of medicinal and ceremonial plants, firewood, and game.

**Kane Gulch Ranger Station** is operated by the Bureau of Land Management, Monticello Field Office, from March through mid-November. It is located on State Route 261, four miles south of U.S. Highway 95. The ranger station provides information on temperatures, weather forecasts, current road conditions, and unusual or noteworthy trail conditions on a blackboard just outside the door on a seasonal basis. Bulletin boards at the station and near the trailheads describe permit information, low impact hiking and camping information, and interpretation of cultural sites. USGS 7.5 minute topographic maps and the Trails Illustrated *Grand Gulch Plateau* map are sold inside the station or can be ordered through the Canyonlands Natural History Association (800-840-8978). There is **NO WATER** available at the ranger station; the closest available water is 10 miles north of the station at Natural Bridges National Monument. All overnight hikers must obtain a permit and register at the Kane Gulch Ranger Station between 8 AM and noon.



Visiting Cedar Mesa is a challenge to orienteering and primitive camping and hiking skills. To allow for diversity in outdoor recreation experiences, the Cedar Mesa area is managed for more primitive type recreation with as few human-made amenities as possible.

Cedar Mesa is a very special and fragile place. Your hike can be a wondrous experience, a glimpse of the past inhabitants. Please remember, you are responsible for leaving this place as you found it so you and your friends and family can continue to enjoy it in the years to come.



Cedar Mesa is managed by the U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Land Management. For more information, write:

Bureau of Land Management,  
Monticello Field Office,

P.O. Box 7,  
Monticello, UT, 84535,

phone: Permits 435-587-1510; Information 435-587-1532  
or visit the Cedar Mesa website at:

[www.blm.gov/utah/monticello](http://www.blm.gov/utah/monticello)



# The People

## ARCHAEOLOGY

### PREHISTORIC PUEBLOAN CHRONOLOGY, GREATER FOUR CORNERS AREA

Dates (approx.)	Periods	Distinctive Characteristics
6500 B.C.– 1500 B.C.	Archaic	Subsistence lifestyle based on wild foods; high mobility; low population density; shelters and open sites; <i>atlatl</i> and dart for hunting; no pottery.
1500 B.C.– A.D. 50	Basketmaker II (early)	Long-term seasonal use of caves for camping, storage, burials, and rock art; campsites and limited activity sites in the open; no pottery; <i>atlatl</i> and dart for hunting; corn and squash cultivated; farming primarily floodplain or runoff-based.
A.D. 50– 500	Basketmaker II (late)	Habitation is shallow pithouse plus storage pits or cists; dispersed settlement with small, low density villages in some area; campsites important as well; no pottery; <i>atlatl</i> and dart for hunting; corn and squash cultivated; upland dry farming in addition to floodplain farming.
A.D. 500– 750	Basketmaker III	Habitation is deep pithouse plus surface storage pits, cists, or rooms; dispersed settlement with occasional small villages and occasional Great Kivas; plain gray pottery, low frequencies of black-on-white pottery; bow and arrow replaces <i>atlatl</i> ; beans added to cultigens.
A.D. 750– 900	Pueblo I	Large villages in some areas; unit pueblos of "protokiva" plus surface room-block of <i>jacal</i> or crude masonry; Great Kivas; plain and neckbanded gray pottery with low frequencies of black-on-white and decorated redware.
A.D. 900– 1150	Pueblo II	Chacoan influence—Great Houses, Great Kivas, Chacoan roads, etc. in many but not all regions; strong differences between Great Houses and surrounding "unit pueblos" composed of a kiva and small surface masonry room block; corrugated gray and elaborate black-on-white pottery, plus decorated red or orange types in some areas.
A.D. 1150– 1350	Pueblo III	Large pueblos and/or "revisionist Great Houses" in some areas; dispersed pattern in others; high kiva-to-room ratios; cliff dwellings; towers; tri-walls; corrugated gray and elaborate black-on-white pottery, plus red or orange pottery in some areas; abandonment of the Four Corners by 1300.
A.D. 1350– 1600	Pueblo IV	Large, plaza-oriented pueblos in Rio Grande and western Pueblo areas; low kiva-to-room ratio; kachina cult wide spread; black-on-white pottery declines relative to red, orange or yellow types; corrugated pottery replaced by plain utility types.

*atlatl*—throwing sticks which have a handle on one end and on the other a spur which fits into a pit or cup drilled into the basal end of a dart shaft. When the dart is thrown, the *atlatl* remains in the hand.

*jacal*—a type of construction in which walls are made of upright poles set at short intervals and heavily plastered with adobe.

The Basketmakers, who lived here from A.D. 200 to 700, are the earliest well-documented human inhabitants of Cedar Mesa. This culture is thought to have derived from earlier nomadic hunters and gatherers, but artifacts from the Basketmaker period are the oldest yet found in the area. When these highly mobile people learned to plant and cultivate corn introduced from the south, they became more settled, and the Basketmaker culture evolved.

The Basketmakers constructed dwellings by excavating shallow pits. They then built up walls and a roof of logs and sticks and covered them with mud. They also used flint tools and wooden digging sticks. Their name was derived from the finely woven baskets they made. The most prevalent remains of the Basketmaker culture on Cedar Mesa are the rock art and their slab-lined storage cists, which can still be seen on the mesa tops or on high ledges protected from the weather.

A series of droughts apparently drove the Basketmakers to the surrounding mountains. When their descendants returned around A.D. 1050, they brought with them the influence of the Mesa Verde people to the east and the Kayenta people from the south. As time passed, the Mesa Verde influence predominated in the Cedar Mesa area.

The Basketmaker culture developed into the Pueblo culture, which is characterized by the making of fine pottery (some of it highly decorated), the cultivation of cotton and weaving of cotton cloth, and the high degree of skill in architecture and stone masonry seen in the cliff dwellings of the canyons.

Check dams and diversion canals, used in crop irrigation, have been found near Dark Canyon and other Colorado River tributaries. The kiva, an underground ceremonial structure found in the Cedar Mesa area, is still in use by the modern-day descendants of these people—the Hopi and New Mexico Pueblo Indians.

Cedar Mesa also has a diversity of rock art panels consisting of petroglyphs (pecked into the rock) and pictographs (painted on with pigments) dating from archaic to historic times. As the figures do not represent a written language, their meaning is left to our imaginations.

By the late 1200s, the prehistoric pueblos moved south into Arizona and southeast into the Rio Grande Valley of New Mexico, probably because of droughts in the 12th and 13th centuries, depletion of natural resources, and pressure from nomadic tribes from the north.

## EARLY EXPLORATION

Pioneer ranchers and cowboys spent considerable time in the canyons and surrounding mesa tops of the area, and found many ruin sites and rock art panels.

The first recorded historic crossing of the area was in 1880 by the Mormon colonizing group known as the "Hole-in-the-Rock" party. They passed through Cedar Mesa on their way toward Bluff, Utah.

In the fall of 1890, Charles McLoyd and C. Graham from Durango, Colorado began excavations in the prehistoric sites.

Richard Wetherill, a rancher from Mancos, Colorado, excavated in Grand Gulch for the American Museum of Natural History in 1893 and 1897. It was primarily through Wetherill's expeditions that archaeologists became aware of the time difference between the Basketmaker and Pueblo periods. Some of the artifacts collected can be seen in the University of Pennsylvania Museum and the American Museum of Natural History in New York.

The historic signatures of these early visitors, written with bullet lead and charcoal, may be seen in several places in Grand Gulch. Present-day visitors are reminded these names written in the stone hold a great deal of historical value. Please do not touch or deface them, and do not add your own signature.

## ANIMALS

Many animal species that the ancient Indians used for food and clothing can still be seen on Cedar Mesa. These Ancestral Puebloans caught cottontail rabbits in nets or snares; rabbit meat added protein to their diets, and they made the pelts into blankets and robes. Infants were often wrapped in rabbit fur blankets for burial. Rock squirrels, too, were probably eaten and their skins used for small items such as medicine bags.

These people hunted mule deer and desert bighorn sheep for food and clothing and fashioned tools from the bones. Judging from the frequency with which desert bighorn sheep are depicted on rock art panels throughout the canyon, they must have been especially important to the residents.

The prehistoric puebloans also valued turkeys. The feathers were often woven into blankets, and it is believed that the turkeys were semi-domesticated animals.

In addition to these terrestrial animals, you may observe a variety of birds in the area including wrens, blackbirds, chickadees, finches, flycatchers, vireos, warblers, swallows, owls, hawks, and eagles.



## CLIMATE

Cedar Mesa's environment can be extremely harsh at certain times of the year. The weather is hot from June through August and it is not uncommon for the temperature to rise past 110 degrees Fahrenheit. Temperatures in the canyons are usually higher than on the mesa top. Summer rains come in late July or early August, bringing flash flood hazards. In the winter months, temperatures often fall below zero, and snow and ice cling to the canyon. This can make climbing and walking on the slickrock very hazardous.

### Average Temperatures (degrees Fahrenheit)

	Low	High
Spring	26	68
Summer	48	86
Fall	35	77
Winter	16	45

## PLANTS

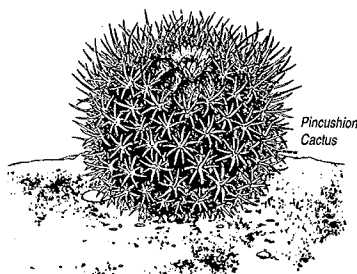
The prehistoric peoples of Cedar Mesa used a number of the native plants for food, medicine, clothing, housing, and ornamentation.

Indian ricegrass and dropseed were probably the most important of the native grasses. These could be harvested in early summer and ground into meal for bread. Fruits of the prickly pear cactus were peeled and eaten, and the peeled and roasted pads were an important food source in times of hardship. The native groups also used four-wing saltbush, blackbrush, Mormon tea, wild turnips, potatoes, rose hips, and sunflower seeds.

The yucca's sword-like leaves were woven into baskets and sandals, and leaf fibers were spun into cords for fine-quality sandals and bags. Yucca roots were used for soap, while the stalks and fruit of the plant were roasted and eaten.

Pinyon pine trees were valuable sources of housing material, fuel, and food; in the past, as in the present, a good crop of protein-rich pinyon nuts could be harvested every few years. Wood from juniper trees was used for firing pottery as well as cooking and heating, and juniper bark was used for several purposes such as roofing shelters and padding cradleboards.

By 2,500 years ago, prehistoric peoples cultivated crops such as corn, beans, squash, and pumpkins, which became their major source of food. The people stored corn, their primary year-round staple, in granaries and used it in a variety of ways. A type of bean, which resembled modern-day pinto beans, was the second most important crop. Squash and pumpkins provided important nutrition, and gourds were hollowed out and used for vessels.



## ASPEN CLONES

On the Kane Gulch trail, the canyon walls begin rising around 1.4 miles from the ranger station, just before an isolated grove of aspen trees. Aspens are usually found at much higher elevation, however, during the last Ice Age, glaciers moved across the land and deposited seeds which survived and grew into trees. The aspens in Kane Gulch are all of the same genetic makeup; they are clones and they represent trees that have been growing there continuously for the past 11,000 years.



# Things to Remember

Cedar Mesa offers the adventurous visitor a chance to test practiced outdoor recreation skills and **Leave-No-Trace** techniques in a rare primitive setting. Except for a few sites along the U.S. Highway 95 corridor and at the Kane Gulch Ranger Station, you will find no vault toilets nor picnic tables. There is no treated drinking water and no trash receptacles. Mesa top car camping is primitive and is often accessed along four-wheel-drive roads. Hiking is on slickrock canyon ledges and along wash bottoms and primitive foot paths—there are no constructed trails or directional signs along the hiking routes.

**Leave-No-Trace** techniques may sometimes seem inconvenient, but are a necessary part of protecting the Cedar Mesa environment. If these techniques are not already part of your camping practices, consider car camping, or begin with a less physically demanding hike that will allow you to practice these techniques.

## EXPERIENCE LEVELS

Cedar Mesa is a very difficult place for a first-time hiker or backpacker. Remember, your party is only as strong as its weakest member. Beginners may want to consider car camping on the mesa top and attempting a few shorter day hikes to become familiar with the area, or hiring a local professional guide to see you safely through your trip. You may also want to try a hike at Natural Bridges or Hovenweep National Monuments, where you will also find visitor centers, toilets, campgrounds, and constructed trails accessing beautiful canyons with ancient ruins.

## TRAILS

The trails in the canyons and on the mesa tops are maintained mostly by hikers walking the same route repeatedly, thus allowing a barren path to develop. It is best to stay on the most impacted route visible; avoid creating unnecessary "social trails".

Where the trail crosses slickrock, there are often cairns (small rock monuments) to point the way. Please do not add or remove trail cairns. Many routes into the canyons are not marked. It is imperative that you obtain and carry a good quality map and be skilled in orienteering and map and compass reading. GPS units are not always reliable between steep canyon walls. Maps weigh less, do not need batteries, and will not break when dropped!

Floods can cause the trail to erode, vegetation to flatten and lie across the trail for miles, and spread much debris across the canyon floor which the trail crosses, making hiking tedious. Encountering a flash flood is also a serious concern while hiking. Know the weather forecast before going in the canyons.

The dark, crumbly-looking soils next to the trails are actually living soil crusts called "cryptobiotic" soil. They are made up of lichens, mosses, green algae, microfungi, and cyanobacteria. These organisms bind the soil together, making it resistant to wind and water erosion. Walking on these crusts can destroy them. Stay on the trail or try to walk only in washes or on rock when possible. There are usually alternate routes to take in case of high water. Every year flash floods come through the canyons. Trails and cairns can be wiped out by one good storm. Volunteer trail crews help to rebuild badly damaged sections of the trail, but there is often a lag time between flood season and trail work.

## EMERGENCIES

Knowledge of basic first aid should be a minimum for any hiking party. In case of emergencies, emergency radio communication and limited aid may be obtained from the rangers at the Kane Gulch Ranger Station when the station is open (March through October). Cell phones usually do not work in the canyons nor in many locations on the mesa tops. Extended search and rescue is provided by the San Juan County Volunteer Search and Rescue Team through the San Juan County Sheriff's Office. Response time for the Search and Rescue Team could be as much as 24 hours, and will usually be conducted in daylight hours only. The rescued party will be held financially responsible for any helicopter flights. Contact the San Juan County Sheriff at 435-587-2237.

## CAMPING

There are no assigned campsites in the canyon systems of Cedar Mesa or on the mesa top at this time; however there are campsites established by use. Some are easily seen from the trail; others are hidden, with side trails leading to them. Slickrock camps are a good option.

**Leave-No-Trace!** In the desert, it is best to use an established campsite and avoid impacting pristine, undisturbed areas. Slickrock and non-vegetated ground, without cryptobiotic crusts, are good choices. Camp at least 200 feet from water sources to allow wildlife to visit these areas.

Camping and building fires is prohibited in any alcove, overhang, or archaeological sites.

No fires are allowed in any of the Cedar Mesa canyons. On the mesa top, fire pans are required to contain all fires. **Leave-No-Trace!** Pack out all ash and charcoal; don't dump or bury it. Use only dead and down wood for fires and always burn wood down completely. Leave no evidence of your fire.

## WATER

Water conditions vary depending on the canyon and the time of year. During any time of year, water conditions can vary from week to week. Stop at the Kane Gulch Ranger Station to check conditions before you hike.

Most springs are dry during the summer months. You may need to pack in all your drinking water. Recommended minimums are one gallon per person per day. During and after heavy rains, springs can be covered by silt-saturated flood water. The most reliable springs in Grand Gulch are Toddie Spring, Sheik's Spring, and Jailhouse Spring.

Use care to avoid polluting water sources. Dogs and pack stock must be closely monitored to prevent trampling and defecating in or near water sources.

## ENJOYING THE RUINS AND ROCK ART

Cedar Mesa and the adjacent canyons were once home to a remarkable prehistoric people. But this fascinating record of the past is threatened. The unintentional damage caused by visitors is slowly destroying the remnants of the ancient culture. These resources are non-renewable. Before entering an archaeological site, take a few moments to plan your "exploration strategy" to ensure that your visit results in minimum impact.

A *midden* is a trash pile left by the original occupants of the site. It is usually recognized by darkened soil, and perhaps a slightly raised area in front of the site. Do not walk through the midden. This can destroy valuable archaeological information and causes erosion which may undermine the walls of structures above it. If a trail has been built across a site, stay on it.

Climbing on roofs and walls can destroy in a moment what has lasted for hundreds of years. Do not lean on or climb on walls or roofs or enter any rooms. Please respect all chain barriers. Use extra care around plastered walls. A bump with a backpack can easily break or chip the plaster.

When you see "thousands" of potsherds and other artifacts, leave them where they are. If each visitor took just one, there would soon be none left. Putting them into piles takes them out of context, exposes them to weather, and destroys clues needed by professional archaeologists gathering information about the site. Please do not re-use prehistoric grinding stones or surfaces.

Enjoy rock art by viewing, sketching and photographing it. Never chalk, trace, or otherwise touch rock art. Any kind of direct contact causes these ancient figures to disintegrate. Do not add your name or any other modern-day rock art. This is vandalism and is punishable by law.

Archaeological and historical sites are protected by the Antiquities Act of 1906 and the Archaeological Resources Protection Act of 1979. It is illegal to damage or disturb any site or to remove anything from the site. Notify the Bureau of Land Management or the County Sheriff if you discover any illegal activity.

Recorded information on current road and trail conditions and weather on Cedar Mesa is available at 435-587-1532.



## SUGGESTED DAY HIKES IN THE AREA

# Day Hiking

### KANE GULCH TO THE JUNCTION WITH GRAND GULCH

From the Kane Gulch Ranger Station (located on State Route 261), you can hike down Kane Gulch and into Grand Gulch. It is 4.0 miles to the junction of Kane and Grand Gulch and the trail drops approximately 600 feet in elevation. At this intersection, you can view a cliff dwelling called Junction Ruin. If you decide to continue, in the next mile you can see Turkey Pen Ruin and Stimper Arch. From Kane Gulch Ranger Station to Stimper Arch is 10.0 miles round trip. That's about a full day hike for most people, especially because you'll want to take time to view the cultural sites and take some pictures.

### ARCH CANYON

Arch Canyon is a 12-mile-long box canyon located north of U.S. Highway 95. If you are traveling west on U-95 from Blanding, turn north on the Comb Wash Road (a dirt road approximately 1.0 mile west of Comb Ridge, 14.0 miles west of the U.S. Highway 95 and U.S. Highway 191 junction). The mouth of Arch Canyon is 2.5 miles up the dirt road. The canyon has beautiful redrock walls, and it is possible to see several arches. The creek that runs along the bottom of the canyon normally has water; all water should be treated before drinking. Look along the canyon walls for hanging gardens; you might also spot some cliff dwellings. Please remember to treat these special places with respect. The access at the mouth of Arch Canyon is Ute tribal land. Please respect this private property and observe all posted signs. Arch Canyon is open to motorized and mechanized access, however, all vehicles must stay on designated routes. Please be considerate of other trail users with whom you may be sharing this route.

### MULE CANYON

Mule Canyon is accessed from U.S. Highway 95. Look for the graded County Road 263 on the north side of the highway, approximately 19.0 miles west of the junction of U.S. Highways 95 and 191. Go north up the county road about 0.25 mile and park. Hike up the canyon to your left. Because of the orientation of this canyon, there are ponderosa pines among the slickrock walls. This is a good day hike, especially with inexperienced or young hikers. In the first four miles, there are about eight cultural sites. These are interesting sites, although smaller than those in Grand Gulch. The route begins in the canyon bottom, and there is very little elevational change, making an easy to moderate hike.

### CAVE CANYON TOWERS

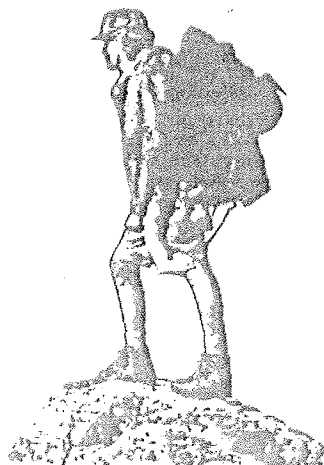
This is a good hike for people who can not go far or just want a sample of what the area is like. The access is off U.S. Highway 95 near Milepost 103. Turn south on the first dirt road east of the Mule Canyon Ruins Interpretive Site. Please close the gate on the access road. Continue on this road approximately 0.5 mile to several parking areas. From there, it is only a few hundred yards to the towers. There are seven towers along the rim of the canyon, although only two are in good shape.

### BUTLER WASH RUINS

This hike is accessed directly off U.S. Highway 95. It is signed and the parking area is on the north side of the highway. The parking area is paved and pit toilet facilities are available. The hiking trail winds its way across some small washes and over slickrock before reaching an overlook of a cliff dwelling, 0.5 mile across the canyon. Interpretive signing is located at the overlook. Walk south of the overlook to view a natural bridge up the canyon. Round trip hiking distance is one mile, and travel time is approximately 1/2 hour. It is an easy to moderate hike. Please recycle interpretive brochures at the trailhead.

### NATURAL BRIDGES NATIONAL MONUMENT (National Park Service fee area)

Natural Bridges National Monument also has some good day hikes. There is an 8.0 mile loop hike as well as shorter variations of that hike. These hikes offer views of rock art, prehistoric dwellings, and three natural bridges. Car camping and water are available in the Monument.



# How to Get Your Permit

## CEDAR MESA / GRAND GULCH ALLOCATION AND RESERVATION SYSTEM

For overnight use in Grand Gulch, Slickhorn Canyon, Fish Canyon, Owl Canyon, North and South Forks of Mule Canyon north of U.S. Highway 95, Road Canyon, and Lime Creek, and their tributaries, you must obtain a backcountry permit. It should be emphasized that the allocation/reservation system applies to **in-canyon, overnight** use only.

A reservation system is in place for spring (March 1–June 15) and fall (Sept. 1–Oct. 31). During other times of the year, self-pay envelopes and registration forms are available at the trailheads. You may call for reservations at 435-587-1510, or write: Bureau of Land Management, P.O. Box 7, Monticello, UT 84535.

### TRAILHEAD ALLOCATION

Use is allocated by the total number of overnight visitors at each trailhead per day. Large groups (8–12 people), groups with pack stock, and commercial groups (including educational and scientific trips) **MUST** have advance reservations. Affiliated, organized groups must supply proof of insurance to obtain a permit. Commercial outfitters are required by July of the previous year.

Allocation is divided approximately ½ for advance reservation and ½ for walk-ins. Walk-in permits will be issued on a first-come, first-served basis and can be obtained at the Kane Gulch Ranger Station from 8 AM to noon, on the day of your trip. If walk-in permits are sold out, you have the option of picking another canyon or area, or trying the following day.

Grand Gulch Trailheads					
	Kane Gulch	Bullet Canyon	Government Trail	Collins Canyon	
Total overnight visitors per day	26	22	12	22	
Reservation	14	12	6	12	
Walk-in	12	10	6	10	

Cedar Mesa Canyons Trailheads					
	Fish/Owl Canyons	Road Canyon	Lime Creek	Mule Canyon	Slickhorn Canyon (no stock use)
Total overnight visitors per day	26	22	22	22	22
Reservation	14	12	12	12	12
Walk-in	12	10	10	10	10

### CEDAR MESA STIPULATIONS FOR SADDLE AND PACK STOCK USE

**ALL COMMERCIAL AND PRIVATE STOCK USE REQUIRES A PERMIT** A permit reservation system is in place requiring reservation permits for overnight use to be obtained from the BLM Monticello Field Office at least 3 weeks in advance for private parties and by July of the previous year for commercial trips. Walk-in overnight permits are not available. Private party payments may be made in advance of your trip start date through the Monticello Field Office and a confirmation packet including stipulations will be mailed. However, physical permits for commercial and private trips must be obtained from the Kane Gulch Ranger Station between the hours of 8:00 am and 12:00 noon on the trip start date or one day prior. All commercial and organized groups are required to submit a Special Recreation Application. Grand Gulch day use requires an advanced permit; the other canyon systems do not.

**OVERNIGHT STOCK USE AREAS:** Kane Gulch, Collins Canyon, Government Trail, Grand Gulch from Kane Gulch to Collins Canyon, Fish Creek Canyon from Comb Wash to the confluence with Owl Canyon, Mule Canyon south of Highway US-95, Road Canyon, Lime Creek Canyon, Johns Canyon and Arch Canyon.

**AREAS FOR DAY USE ONLY:** Bullet Canyon from Grand Gulch to Jailhouse Ruin, Fish Canyon from the confluence with Owl Canyon upstream two miles, McCloyd Canyon to the impassable pour off, and the mouth of Owl Canyon to Nevill's Arch.

**AREAS CLOSED TO STOCK USE:** Grand Gulch below Collins Canyon, all of the Slickhorn Canyons, Mule Canyon north of Highway US-95, Bullet Canyon above Jailhouse Ruin, Fish Creek Canyon from 2 miles upstream from the confluence with Owl Canyon, and Owl Canyon above Nevill's Arch.

**USE LIMITATIONS:** stock use, both day and overnight, is subject to the provisions of the Grand Gulch Plateau Cultural and Recreation

### FEES

**There are fees for both day and overnight use. Contact the Monticello BLM office at 435-587-1510 for information.**

*100% of your fees go to maintain and protect Cedar Mesa*

Management Plan which allows for no more than one overnight stock party at a time in any canyon on Cedar Mesa. However, Grand Gulch is limited to only one stock trip at any time, day or overnight. In the other canyon systems on Cedar Mesa, day stock use is not restricted. The BLM will monitor day use and reserves the right to implement a day use allocation and reservation system at a future date if the impacts of day use visitation warrant.

**GROUP SIZE** for overnight and day use in the Grand Gulch Primitive and other Cedar Mesa Canyons is restricted to 12 people and 10 animals (pack and/or saddle).

**FEED:** Stock users will be required to take all feed (non-germinating and weed-free) necessary to sustain their animals while on the trip.

**LOOSE HERDING** of pack and saddle stock is prohibited. All stock must be under physical control. When tethered, all stock must be at least 200 feet away from any water source and archaeological sites and their surrounding benches.

**NO NEW TRAILS** will be established for stock use. Use will be restricted to existing trails and routes in areas open to recreational stock use.



## HOW TO MAKE ADVANCE RESERVATIONS

Advance reservations can be submitted by:

Phone - 435-587-1510

or

Mail-in - Bureau of Land Management  
Cedar Mesa/Grand Gulch  
Permit Reservation Office  
P.O. Box 7  
Monticello, UT 84535

No e-mail or faxes will be accepted.

- All advance reservation permits must be picked up at the Kane Gulch Ranger Station from 8 A.M. to noon on the date of your trip.
- Reservations for backpacking must be made no earlier than 3 months and no later than 2 days prior to trip start date.
- Stock trip reservations can be made starting the first business day of January for that calendar year.
- Advance reservations are issued on a first-come, first-served basis.
- **Date is reserved ONLY when payment is received.**
- Payment can be made with credit card, money order, or check.
- Accepted reservations will receive confirmation by mail, fax, or e-mail.
- No refunds will be issued; however, cancellations received 15 or more days prior to the trip start date may be issued credit to be used within the same calendar year.
- If requested start date is not available, you have the option of picking another date, trailhead, or canyon.
- Permits are made of waterproof material and must be attached to trip leader's backpack. License plate numbers of all vehicles associated with the group must be written on all permit receipts and placed on dashboards of all vehicles so numbers are visible.

## HOW TO OBTAIN DAY-USE PERMITS AND MULTIPLE DAY-USE PERMITS

Day-use permits can be obtained at fee tubes placed at the following trailheads/canyons:

Kane Gulch	Cigarette Springs Road
Collins Canyon	Todie Canyon
Government Trail	Bullet Canyon
Snowflat Road	Fish/Owl Canyons
Slickhorn Canyon Road	

Payment can be made with check or cash. Fees must be placed in envelope and dropped into fee tube, with tear-off receipt placed on vehicle dashboard so permit number is visible. This permit covers all occupants of that vehicle only.

**Multiple day-use permits** can be obtained trailheads or at:

Kane Gulch Ranger Station  
8 A.M. to noon, daily

Multiple day-use permits are for consecutive days only and may not be split for use later in the year.

**Annual day-use permits** are available at the B.L.M. Monticello Field Office or the Kane Gulch Ranger Station. The permit must be hung from the rearview mirror of the vehicle and covers the day-use fee for the occupants of that vehicle only.

## Hiking and Overnight Camping Permit Stipulations

**Camping** is permitted in well-used campsites only. No new campsites may be created. No party may spend more than two consecutive nights at campsites near Junction Ruin, Turkey Pen Ruin, Jailhouse Ruin, and the mouth of Bullet Canyon. No camping is allowed at any ruins, rock art sites or alcoves, nor on the bench area surrounding Split Level Ruin. Backpacker camping is not allowed within 1 mile of the San Juan River in either Grand Gulch or Slickhorn Canyon.

**No fires** are allowed in any of the Cedar Mesa canyons, including Grand Gulch. On the mesa tops, campfires are permitted only in established campsites and campgrounds. A metal fire pan will be used to protect the site from burn scars. Fires will be allowed to burn to ashes. **Leave-No-Trace!** All remaining ash, charcoal, or other unburned material will be packed out by the camping party. Ash and charcoal must not be buried, dumped, or left in place.

**No swimming or bathing** is allowed in the pools, streams, or potholes. During hot weather, these pools may be the only water source for wildlife and other hikers.

**Group size** is limited to 12 people for day or overnight use. Groups of 8 or more must obtain an advance reservation.

**Pack it in, pack it out.** All cans, trash, organic garbage, and burnable refuse, including toilet paper, must be carried out. **Leave-No-Trace!** Liquid garbage such as coffee or soft drinks may be discarded 200 feet away from water sources. Dish water must be strained and discarded 200 feet from camps, trails, and water sources.

Use of **climbing gear** to gain access to archaeological sites is prohibited.

Pets must be kept on a leash and under physical control at all times. No pets are allowed in Grand Gulch and Slickhorn Canyons and their tributaries, nor in the McLoyd Canyon/Moonhouse Recreation Management Zone. Pets must be kept out of springs, water holes and other natural water sources. Pets are not allowed in any ruins. Pet waste must be buried away from trails, water sources, cultural sites, and campsites. **Leave-No-Trace!**

**Latrines** or shallow catholes for human waste disposal should be dug 4-6" deep and covered with soil. **Leave-No-Trace!** Pack out toilet paper; do not burn it. Burial of human waste is prohibited within one mile of the San Juan River.

Camp, bathe, wash dishes, and dispose of body waste at least 200 feet from water sources or dry creek beds. Do not use soap in water sources even if it is biodegradable.

**Bicycles and all motorized vehicles** must stay on open, established roads. No bicycles allowed on hiking trails. All vehicles used as a mesa top base for day hiking or overnight hiking in the canyons must have a hiking permit displayed on the dashboard or handlebars.

## HOW TO OBTAIN OVERNIGHT WALK-IN PERMITS

Overnight, walk-in permits can be obtained at:

Kane Gulch Ranger Station  
8 A.M. to noon, daily

March 1-June 15 and Sept. 1-Oct. 31

- Overnight, walk-in permits will be issued on the day of the trip, between these hours ONLY.
- No walk-in permits will be issued in advance of the trip start date.
- Payment can be made with credit card or check only.
- If permits are sold out, you have the option of picking another date, trailhead, or canyon.
- Permits are made of waterproof material and must be attached to trip leader's backpack. License plate numbers of all vehicles associated with the group must be written on permit receipts and placed on dashboards of all vehicles so all numbers are visible.

# Getting there in Grand Gulch

## DISTANCES FROM KANE GULCH RANGER STATION

See Trails Illustrated *Grand Gulch Plateau* map

	Miles	Side Trip Miles
Ranger Station	0.0	
Junction Spring	4.0	
Junction Ruin	4.0	0.2
Turkey Pen Ruin	4.7	
Stimper Arch	5.0	
Fortress Canyon	5.6	
Todie Canyon	7.2	
Spring (up Todie Canyon)		0.2
Spring	7.5	
Pour Off Pool	8.8	
Lion Tracks Spring	9.6	
Split Level Ruin	10.0	
Coyote Canyon	12.8	
The Thumb	13.7	
Shiek's Canyon	14.2	
Green Mask Spring (up Shiek's Canyon)	14.2	.02
Bullet Junction Spring	15.6	
Jailhouse Spring (up Bullet Canyon)		2.2
Jailhouse Ruin		2.4
Perfect Kiva Ruin		2.7
Bullet Canyon Trailhead		7.2
Totem Pole	18.1	
Green Canyon Spring		0.2
Step Canyon	19.5	
Step Spring	19.5	0.8
Dripping Canyon	22.3	
Spring	22.3	0.8
Cow Tank Canyon	22.8	
Cow Tank Spring	22.8	0.8
Big Man Panel	24.7	
Polly's Island	26.2	
Polly's Spring	26.2	1.0
Government Trailhead		3.1
Big Pour Off Spring	29.3	
Deer Canyon	31.0	
Deer Canyon Spring	31.0	0.5
Banister Ruin	33.0	
Banister Spring	33.3	
Collins Canyon	36.0	
Collins Canyon Trailhead		2.0
The Narrows	36.3	
Red Man Canyon	42.3	
Wetherill Arch and Wetherill Arch Spring	45.0	
San Juan River	51.7	

### CAMPING

There are campsites scattered throughout the canyon. See "Things to Remember" for camping tips. Split Level Bench is closed to camping, and no camping is allowed within one mile of the San Juan River.



## Access Routes into Grand Gulch

### Kane Gulch to Grand Gulch

- **Map:** USGS Kane Gulch
- **Access:** park at the Kane Gulch Ranger Station.
- **Trail:** 4.0 miles to junction with Grand Gulch; easy to moderately difficult. The trail begins next to the trailhead kiosk at the west end of the parking lot and continues across the street. There are a few switchbacks into Kane Gulch.
- **Water:** There are usually a few potholes of water along the way; there is an intermittent spring 0.25 mile downstream from the junction of Kane and Grand gulches.
- **Campsites:** A beautiful group campsite is located at the junction of Kane and Grand, shaded by many large cottonwood trees; some campsites on slickrock are within 1.0 mile of the junction.

### Bullet Canyon to Grand Gulch

- **Maps:** USGS Cedar Mesa North, Polly's Pasture
- **Access:** Drive 7.0 miles south of Kane Gulch Ranger Station on State Highway 261 and turn right. This dirt road (County Road 251) takes you 1.5 miles to the trailhead.
- **Trail:** 7.2 miles to junction with Grand Gulch; moderately difficult. In 0.4 mile, the trail descends 100 feet in elevation; there are a few drops along the trail. Approximately 1.5 miles from the trailhead is a boulder field that the trail skirts to the right along a steep slope. After the first 2.5 miles and 500 foot drop in elevation, the trail flattens out.
- **Water:** Jailhouse Spring is 5.0 miles from the trailhead; it is often the only water source in Bullet Canyon. There is a seasonal spring at the junction of Bullet Canyon and Grand Gulch.
- **Campsites:** There are campsites near both springs.

### Government Trail to Grand Gulch

- **Map:** USGS Polly's Pasture
- **Access:** Drive 10.0 miles south of Kane Gulch Ranger Station on State Route 261. Just before Milepost 19, across from the Cigarette Springs Road, turn right on a dirt road (County Road 203/245). Travel 2.4 miles, then turn right at the fork (County Road 245); continue 3.1 miles to the sign at the turnoff and go right (at this point high clearance is required). The trailhead is 1.5 miles from the sign.
- **Trail:** 3.1 miles to junction with Grand Gulch; easy to moderately difficult. From the trailhead, hike 3.0 miles on the mesa to the canyon rim. This mesa-top section is completely exposed, offering no shade in the heat of the day. During a thunderstorm there is no cover from lightning, which often strikes the mesa tops. From the canyon rim, 0.6 mile of trail makes long, gradual switchbacks into Grand Gulch, dropping 400 feet in elevation and ending at Polly's Island.
- **Water:** No springs; in wet weather, potholes along the descent may fill with rainwater.
- **Campsites:** Near the top of the descent, there are places to camp on slickrock; there are campsites near the junction with Polly's Canyon.

### Collins Canyon to Grand Gulch

- **Map:** USGS Red House Spring
- **Access:** Drive north from the Kane Gulch Ranger Station on State Route 261 for approximately 4.0 miles to U.S. Highway 95. Turn left, driving about 9.0 miles to State Route 276 and turn left again. Near Milepost 85 there is a sign indicating the Collins Canyon Road (County Road 260) to the left (south). This dirt road travels 6.5 miles to the trailhead; there is one fork, stay right. The road ends at trailhead.
- **Trail:** 2.0 miles to junction with Grand Gulch; easy. There is no steep descent into Collins Canyon; the trail follows the wash into the canyon; there is a small cowboy camp just past the gate near the beginning of the trail.
- **Water:** There is a spring near the trailhead.
- **Campsites:** None before reaching Grand Gulch.

### Todie Canyon to Grand Gulch

- Note:** Todie Canyon is a suggested entry access for day hikes only. It is not recommended for novice hikers
- **Map:** USGS Cedar Mesa North
  - **Access:** Drive south of the Kane Gulch Ranger Station on State Route 261 for approximately 3.9 miles (just before Milepost 25). Turn right (west) on a dirt road (County Road 236A) which takes you 1.2 miles to the trailhead. This road often requires four-wheel drive after rains.
  - **Trail:** 2.5 miles to junction with Grand Gulch; difficult access, not recommended for novice or young hikers. Travel northwest past the parking lot along the south rim of Todie Canyon for 0.3 mile. Within a distance of 400 feet, the trail descends 400 feet in elevation. Trail erosion and bouldering make the trail strenuous and technical.
  - **Water:** There is a spring 0.2 mile up Todie Canyon from the junction with Grand Gulch.
  - **Campsites:** There are campsites near the spring.



## GRAND GULCH HIKING MILEAGES AND RECOMMENDED TIME (one way)

	Kane Gulch Trailhead	Grand Gulch	Bullet Canyon Junction	Bullet Canyon Trailhead	Polly's Island	Government Trailhead	Collins Canyon Trailhead	San Juan River
<b>Kane Gulch Trailhead</b>		4.0 miles 2-3 hours	15.6 miles 2 days	22.8 miles 3 days minimum	26.2 miles 4 days minimum	29.3 miles 4 days minimum	38.0 miles 5-7 days	51.7 miles 9 days
<b>Bullet Canyon Trailhead</b>	22.8 miles 3 days	7.2 miles 3-4 hours			17.8 miles 3 days minimum	20.9 miles 3 days	29.6 miles 4 days	43.3 miles 7-8 days
<b>Collins Canyon Trailhead</b>	38.0 miles 5-7 days	2.0 miles 1 hour	22.4 miles 3 days minimum	29.6 miles 4 days	11.7 miles 2 days	14.7 miles 2 days		17.7 miles 2 days minimum

## Canyon Hiking With Your Dog

### CEDAR MESA PET STIPULATIONS

All pets must be collared, leashed, and under human control at all times. No pets are allowed in Grand Gulch and Slickhorn Canyons and their tributaries, nor in the McLoyd Canyon/Moonhouse Recreation Management Zone. In the interest of diversity, this offers a hiking opportunity for those who wish to hike dog and stock free.

Pets are not allowed in or at any alcoves, rock art sites, or ruins. The instinctual habits of dogs to run, climb, chew, dig, and defecate at random can be extremely damaging to cultural sites.

Pets must not harass or harm wildlife. Wild animals have a very tenuous hold on life. The extra energy expended in fear of a possible or perceived predator can tip the balance between life and death.

Pets must not harass visitors and other visitors' pets. Remember, some folks are very leery of dogs—no matter how friendly the dog may be.

Pets are not allowed to swim or play in springs, pot holes, or other natural water sources. Desert canyon and mesa water sources are priceless and must be maintained as pristine as possible for the health of humans and wildlife.

Pets are not allowed to bark often or incessantly. Sounds carry far in the canyons. Solitude and quiet are very important to most canyon hikers. If your pet is noisy, you may miss much of the canyon experience yourself.

Pet waste must be buried in a shallow hole away from trails, campsites, cultural sites, and natural water sources. Burying the waste helps reduce the smell and discourages flies. **Leave-No-Trace!**

### SAFETY TIPS

Keep your dog on a leash and near you. Leashes protect your pet from getting lost or getting into dangerous hiking situations. They can also protect your dog from porcupines, mountain lions, snakes, and other dogs. As an added benefit, a leashed dog's keen senses can enhance your awareness of nearby wildlife or other hikers.

Avoid hiking with your dog in terrain you have not hiked before. Know the potential hazards of the hike before you take your dog. Be aware and conscientious of your dog's hiking ability. Just because your loyal friend will follow you anywhere does not mean anywhere is safe for your loyal friend.

Pause to care for paws. Your dog's feet are its lifeline in the backcountry. Check regularly for burrs or cactus spines that may get caught in paws. Watch for worn paws due to hiking on slickrock. Carry dog "booties" to slip over and protect damaged paws. You don't want to be carrying your dog out of the canyon!

Avoid hiking with your dog in extreme heat. A dog's natural body temperature is higher than a human's, making dogs much more susceptible to heat exhaustion. The slickrock and sand can quickly burn the pads of your dog's paws, which can be very painful, and very dangerous in the backcountry.

Carry enough water for you AND your dog. When hiking in the desert, water sources can be few, far, and unreliable. Carry at least as much water for your dog as you would for yourself and don't forget to carry a lightweight water bowl. Dogs are susceptible to waterborne bacteria, including giardia. During and after your trip, watch for signs of intestinal distress.

Carry a pet first aid kit. Your veterinarian can give you advice on what to include. Many pet supply stores and catalogs offer ready-made kits for sale.

Pre-trip conditioning. Like you, your dog needs to be in good shape for your hike. Before doing an extended hike, it is important to take your dog on several shorter training hikes. (This would also be a good time to try out that stylish new leash or dog pack.) Watch for signs of fatigue and rest when needed.

### THE PRIVILEGE TO HIKE WITH YOUR DOG COULD BE LOST!

Due to numerous visitor complaints and concerns regarding dogs, the Bureau of Land Management is considering banning dogs from all Cedar Mesa canyons, including Grand Gulch. The decision to continue to allow dogs in the canyons must meet the objectives of the Cedar Mesa Management Plan.

How well you manage your dog in the canyons today will bear directly on the future of this privilege. You can help by planning a safe and reasonable trip for you and your dog and by following the pet stipulations listed above.





Slickhorn Canyon is a canyon of many shapes and colors twisted and carved in eroded reds, browns, and yellows. It is an impressive canyon with sandstone walls varying in height from 300 feet in the north end to 800 feet as the canyon approaches the San Juan River. The shimmering hues of the Cedar Mesa Sandstone give way to the rugged Halgaito Shale as the river nears.

## Prehistoric and Historic Values

There are several Ancient Puebloan sites in the canyon: cliff dwellings, pictographs, and petroglyphs can be found.

At the mouth of Slickhorn, remnants of the oil exploration efforts from the 1920s and '50s, such as cables, ropes, drilling equipment, and wagon parts, lie scattered around the drill holes above the river.

If you find historic or prehistoric sites, please leave them as you find them. All sites are protected by the Archaeological Resources Protection Act and Antiquities Act. Report vandalism or disturbances to the Kane Gulch Rangers or the Monticello BLM office.

## Hiking Conditions

Hiking in this canyon is rugged. The creek channel is frequently clogged with boulders, and there are many pour-offs and steep talus to be negotiated, challenging even the experienced hiker.

Pets and stock animals are **not** allowed in Slickhorn Canyon or its tributaries.

At least four days should be allowed to hike the entire length of the canyon and explore the side canyons. The going is slow. Camping is not allowed within one mile of the San Juan River; this area is reserved camping for river rafters.

Flash floods can occur at any time! Be aware of weather conditions, especially up-canyon from you.

## Water

Slickhorn Canyon has a few springs in the upper forks of the canyon, and a bit more water during spring runoff, but can become extremely dry. Incredibly long, dry stretches may be encountered. Top off water bottles at any water source and turn back if little water is found.

## Maps

The Trails Illustrated *Grand Gulch Plateau* map, and/or the USGS 7.5 minute topographic series maps: Slickhorn East, Slickhorn West, and Polly's Pasture.

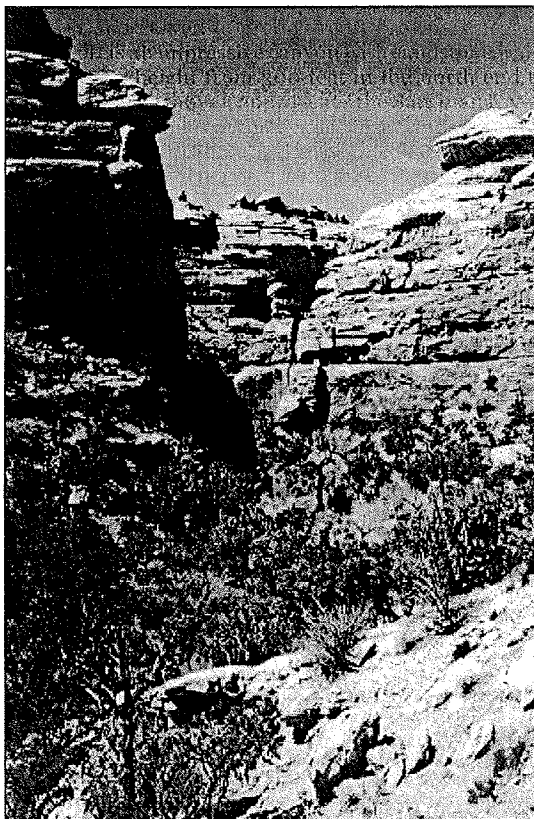
## Access Points

Although there are multiple access points for Slickhorn Canyon, Access No. 4 and Access No. 6, as listed on the Trails Illustrated *Grand Gulch Plateau* map, are recommended. For these access points, drive 9.4 miles south of the Kane Gulch Ranger Station on State Route 261, then turn right (west) on County Road 203 directly across from the Cigarette Springs Road. In 2.5 miles, you will reach a major junction; stay left, heading south.

Access No. 4 is 4.3 miles south of the major junction. The road dips down into the wash, where you will see two old cattle watering troughs. There are pullouts on both sides of the road for parking.

Access No. 6 is 1.2 miles beyond Access No. 4. The road passes over a cattleguard, and enters an area where the trees have been chained off. A corral will be visible at the head of a small draw. Park by the corral and follow the draw west into a side canyon.

All trailheads are accessible to two-wheel-drive vehicles during good weather. High clearance is helpful. After a heavy rainfall, or during winter, the roads can become quite slick, and four-wheel drive is recommended. During very wet conditions, even four-wheel-drive vehicles may have some trouble. Please use caution.



Fish and Owl Creeks both cut diagonally across the eastern edge of Cedar Mesa, coming together several miles before they enter Comb Wash. They are both deep canyons, quite narrow, with an abundance of scenic beauty.

# Fish and Owl Canyons

Erosion from Fish and Owl Creeks have created canyons that differ from the other canyon systems on Cedar Mesa by their depth, the narrowness of the canyons, and their pools of water in the spring to fall months. The canyon walls average 500 feet high, with the width varying from several hundred feet to very narrow at the upper reaches of Fish Creek.

Many of the pools in these canyons have extensive hanging gardens, offering a wide variety of vegetation. The rare Kachina daisy (*Erigeron kachinensis*) can be found at one of these springs. The vegetation varies from sage flats in the lower ends of the canyons to cottonwood trees and pine stands on the wider benches in the upper forks.

Nevill's Arch is an impressive, prominent feature in Owl Creek, jutting out into the canyon from high on a "fin" of Cedar Mesa Sandstone. There is another arch in Fish Creek, but is hardly visible unless you are directly below it.

## Archaeology

A few cliff dwellings and rock art sites may be visible, but due to the narrow canyon bottoms, farming did not occur prehistorically, so few sites are associated within the canyons proper.

Please respect these ancient sites wherever you find them and preserve them for future generations to enjoy and study. Be aware of the "midden" (ancient trash heap) and avoid disturbing it. Leave artifacts where you find them so that others may appreciate these treasures.

## Wildlife and Flora

Wildlife is scarce, but tracks of bobcat, mountain lion, ringtail, and an occasional bear may be seen in the canyons.

Small fish, including killifish, chubs, suckers, and shiners or dace, may be found in the pools.

Toads and frogs can be seen and heard, and there is also beaver activity in the lower reaches of Fish Creek.

There are many varieties of wildflowers that bloom, especially after a wet winter or spring. Vetch, penstemon, cacti, lupine, and cliffrose are only a few.

## Hiking Conditions

There are no maintained trails in these canyon. Carry an accurate map! Stone cairns are often unreliable as they are easily knocked down, and moved when they are rebuilt.

The recommended route is a loop which enters Owl Canyon and exits from Fish Canyon. The main loop is approximately 17 miles long. At least three days is recommended to do this hike.

The first three miles of Owl Canyon are steep, mostly slickrock, with several large pour-offs to be circumvented. One of these detours involves going into a small side canyon on the north side of the main canyon and scrambling down some rocks. Nevill's Arch is approximately five miles into Owl Canyon.

The junction of Owl and Fish Canyons is quite wide. Fish Canyon is more narrow than Owl but is gentle and without impasse in the first five miles.

## Maps

Trails Illustrated *Grand Gulch Plateau* and/or USGS topographic 7.5 minute quads: South Long Point, Bluff N.W., and Snowflat Spring Cave.



The upper forks of Fish Creek are all blocked by boulders and rock fall. The fork running north to U.S. Highway 95 is considered difficult walking and is blocked for several miles by pour-offs and talus. After passing this north fork, watch the south side of the canyon for the main route to the mesa top.

This route climbs out of the canyon approximately 600 feet on a steep talus slope to a 12-foot wall which may require passing packs and/or a short rope to reach the top. The trail then goes 1.5 miles through the pinyon-juniper forest, crossing several drainages before returning to the trailhead.

## Access

The road access to the trailhead is one mile south of the Kane Gulch Ranger Station on State Route 261. Turn east and drive approximately 5 miles on a dirt road to an old drill hole which is the parking area. This road is passable to passenger vehicles (two-wheel-drive) during good weather, however rain or snow can make it impassable even to four-wheel-drive vehicles.

## Water

Upper Owl Creek has three large springs which are generally dependable in the spring, but do not count on them for water in the summer months. Owl Creek is usually dry from Nevill's Arch to the confluence with Fish Creek. Fish Creek often has water in the stretch beginning approximately two miles above the confluence with Owl Creek and continuing to the junctions with the upper forks.

Please remember that pools are often the only water source for animals and other hikers. No bathing or swimming is allowed in pools. Do not allow dogs to enter the pools.

No camping is allowed within 200 feet of any water source.

Top off all water bottles when water is encountered.

Conditions change daily! Filter all water!



Tracks of mountain lions are occasionally seen, but the big cats themselves are very elusive creatures.



# Road Canyon and Lime Creek

The elevation in the upper ends of both Road and Lime Creek Canyons begins at approximately 6,200 feet and drops to 4,900 feet at the lower ends.

The walls of the canyons vary from 100 feet in the upper ends to over 500 feet in the lower ends. Erosion of the colorful Cedar Mesa Sandstone has created a layer cake effect of multiple tiers, especially in the

middle and lower sections of the canyons. There are

numerous archaeological sites present in both canyons. Please take care when visiting these fragile sites.

## ROAD CANYON ACCESS POINTS

1. From the Kane Gulch Ranger Station, drive 9.0 miles south on State Route 261 to the Cigarette Springs Road. Turn left (east) and drive 3.5 miles. At this point there is an unmarked pullout on the left. A route starts from the northeast corner of the parking area and runs 0.5 mile through the pinyon and juniper forest to the canyon rim and drops approximately 100 feet to the canyon floor.
2. Drive 6.1 miles from the junction of State Route 261 and the Cigarette Springs Road. Take an unmarked spur road to the left (north) and travel 0.8 mile to the end of the road on the canyon rim (high-clearance vehicles only). From the parking area, enter the first drainage to the east and make your way down the main canyon.

## ROAD CANYON CAMPING

Car camping is available on the mesa top:

- 3.5 miles from State Route 261, on left—3 campsites
- 3.8 and 3.9 miles from State Route 261, on right—2 camp sites
- 6.1 miles from State Route 261, turn left, travel 0.8 mile to the end of the road (high clearance vehicles only)—4 campsites
- 8.8 miles from State Route 261, at end of road (Cigarette Spring)—4 campsites

## HIKING CONDITIONS

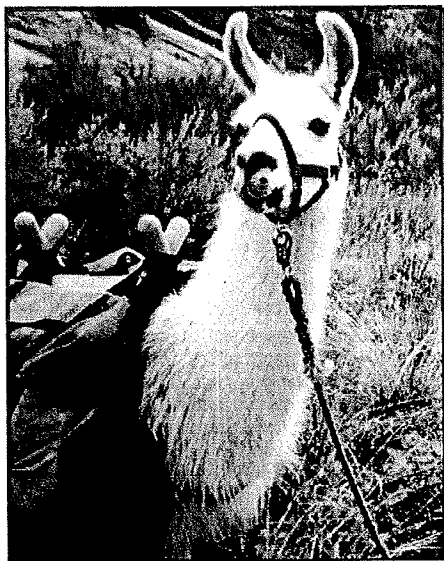
There are no maintained trails in either canyon; routes generally follow the mostly dry creek beds. There are long stretches of slickrock in both canyons, with several pour-offs to negotiate. The canyon bottoms are not as lush as some of the other Cedar Mesa canyons. Shade is at a minimum in some parts of these canyons.

## WATER

Both canyons have seasonal, intermittent running water which is usually confined to the upper ends of the canyons. There are several large pour-off pools with large cottonwood trees, and extensive hanging gardens in the middle and lower portions of the canyons. No bathing or swimming is allowed in the pools. Remember that at certain times of year, you may encounter long, dry stretches. During the summer months, the canyons can be totally dry. Keep water bottles topped off. Filter all water.

## MAPS

The Trails Illustrated *Grand Gulch Plateau* map and/or the USGS 7.5 minute topographic maps: Snow Flat Spring Cave, Cigarette Spring Cave, and Cedar Mesa North.



## LIME CREEK ACCESS POINTS

1. From the Kane Gulch Ranger Station, drive 9.0 miles south on State Route 261 to the Cigarette Springs Road. Turn left (east) and drive 3.4 miles to the Lime Creek Road (unmarked). Turn right and travel south 1.2 miles to a fork. Turn right and travel 3.0 miles to the head of Lime Creek canyon. This route requires vehicles with four-wheel drive and high clearance. From the head of the canyon, an unmarked route descends into the canyon.
2. From the Kane Gulch Ranger Station, drive 13.0 miles south on State Route 261 to Milepost 16. Turn left (east) on an unmarked road approximately 10 yards before the milepost sign. Travel 1.4 miles to a fork, then left 0.5 mile to the head of the canyon. Locate the unmarked trail mentioned above and descend into the canyon. This road requires high-clearance vehicles.

## LIME CREEK CAMPING

Car camping is available on the mesa top:

- 1.2 miles from the Lime Creek turnoff on Cigarette Springs Road, left 100 yards (high clearance and four-wheel-drive vehicles)—2 campsites
- From the turnoff at Milepost 16—several campsites on the road to the head of the canyon.
- At the head of Lime Creek canyon (from Milepost 16, high-clearance vehicles)—3 campsites



Two fairly easy hiking areas are the North and South Forks of Mule Canyon, north of U.S. Highway 95. The two canyons run roughly parallel to each other. They are similar in appearance, being relatively shallow at the trailhead near the road, and gradually deepening as they wind toward the west. Alternating bands of red and white sandstone typify the canyon walls, which become increasingly sheer at the upper ends of the forks.

Numerous prehistoric ruins surprise the hiker in the South Fork, and some may be found in the North Fork, also. The majority of the cultural sites are on south-facing slopes, up on the canyon walls.

The vegetation provides an interesting aspect of Mule Canyon. On the north-facing slopes of South Mule you will find ponderosa pine and Douglas fir. The temperature and the water combine to create a "micro-climate," allowing these trees to survive. These magnificent trees stand in stark contrast to the south-facing slopes where the ruins stand among more typical high desert vegetation.

Stock is not allowed in either of these canyons.

#### MULE CANYON ACCESS POINTS

From U.S. Highway 95, turn north on County Road 263, which is 0.5 mile east of the Mule Canyon Indian Ruins. Drive 0.25 mile north, where Mule Canyon crosses the road. This is the South Fork of Mule Canyon. Park in the pullout along the road. The trailhead is located to the west, just below the road. The North Fork is another 0.75 mile up the county road.

#### MULE CANYON CAMPING

The beginning of the South Fork of Mule Canyon is fairly narrow with few good camping spots. Recommended camping is on the slickrock benches. Approximately 3.5 miles from the trailhead, the canyon bottom widens. Open, relatively flat areas near the ponderosa pines provide good camping areas.

## North and South Forks of Mule Canyon

#### HIKING CONDITIONS

The South Fork of Mule Canyon is easy-to-moderate hiking. Although there is no constructed, maintained trail, the route follows the creek bottom and a commonly used foot path. Boulders and evergreen trees crowd the canyon bottoms in the upper ends, while the lower stretches are wider and more open. There are numerous places where the trail crosses the stream bed. Be prepared for wet feet! The hike is in the canyon bottom and only gains a few hundred feet over the course of seven miles.

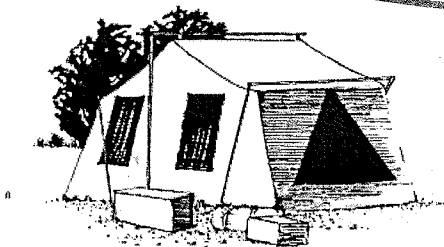
#### WATER

Mule Creek does not flow year-round, but there are usually pockets or pools of water in the wash bottom. However, they can be completely dry in summer and fall months.

#### MAPS

The Trails Illustrated *Grand Gulch Plateau* map, and/or the USGS 7.5 minute topographic maps: Hotel Rock and South Long Point.

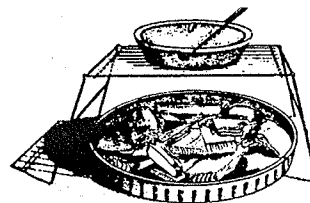
## CAR CAMPING



Car camping, combined with day hikes, is an enjoyable way to experience the area. There are numerous places on the mesa tops, as well as along dirt roads in Butler Wash, Comb Wash, and Arch Canyon. No permits are required for car camping.

Camp only in well-used campsites. No new campsites may be created. **Leave-No-Trace** camping techniques apply here also. All cans, trash, organic garbage (orange peels, egg shells, etc.) and burnable garbage, including toilet paper, must be carried out. Use only biodegradable soap, and dispose of dishwater and cooking liquids at least 200 feet away from camps, trails, and water sources.

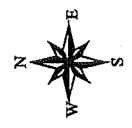
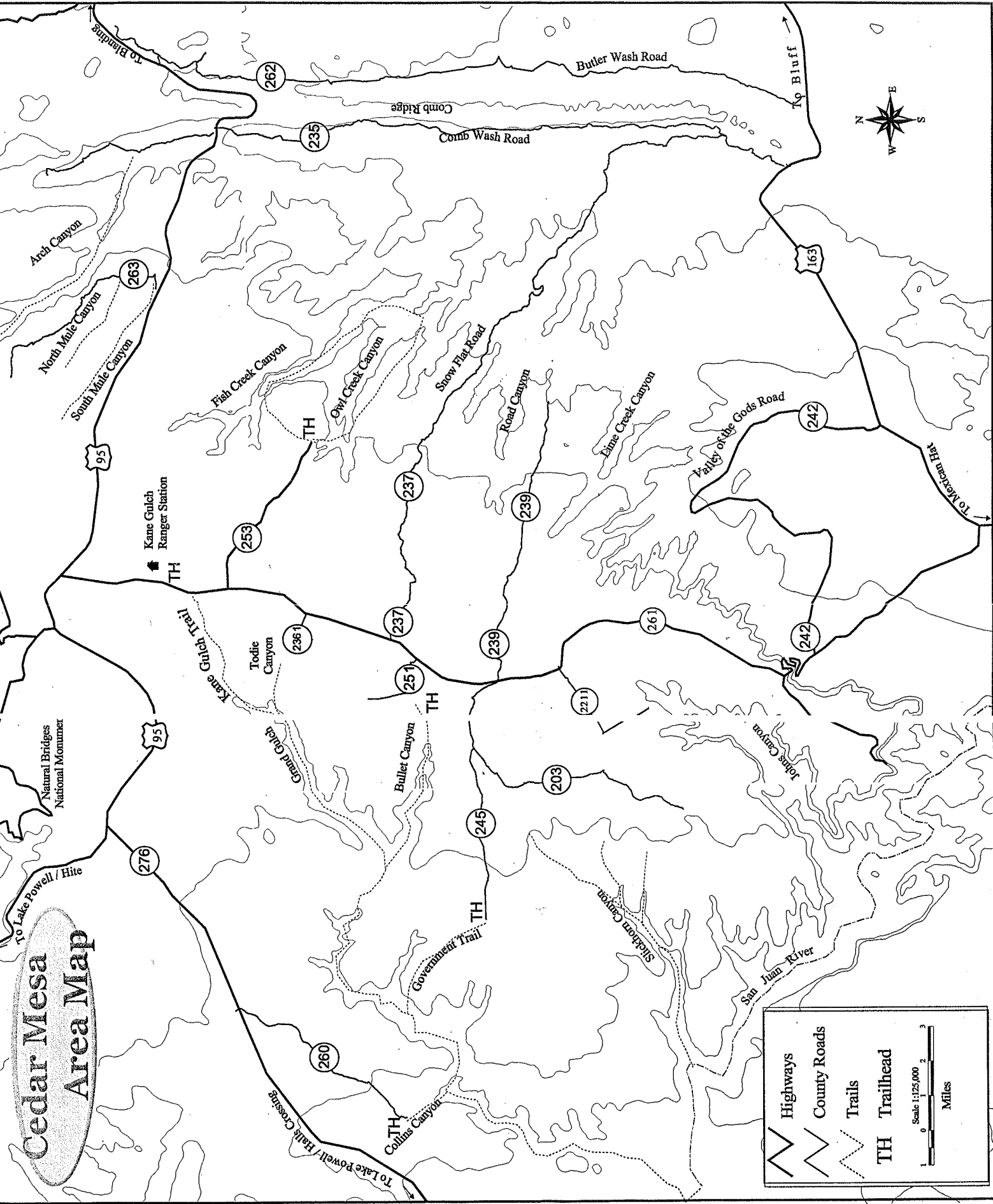
Fires are permitted on the mesa tops, but should be contained in a metal firepan. All ash and charcoal must be carried out—not buried or dumped at your campsite. **Leave-No-Trace!**



Recorded information on current road and trail conditions and weather on Cedar Mesa is available at 435-587-1532.



# Cedar Mesa Area Map



	Highways
	County Roads
	Trails
	TH Trailhead

Scale 1:125,000

0 1 2 3 Miles

# Canyonlands Natural History Association

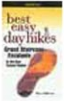
## Partners in Public Land Education

The following books, maps, and other interpretive information can be obtained through Canyonlands Natural History Association (CNHA). To see a full line of products please check out our website at [www.cnha.org](http://www.cnha.org). You may also call our office at 800-840-8978 or 435-259-6003. When visiting the area, materials can also be purchased at the Moab Information Center or at the Blanding Information Center. A limited selection of items is available at the Kane Gulch Ranger station during office hours.



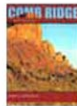
### #1688 Hiking Grandstaircase Escalante & the Glenn Canyon Region \$19.95

In this book you will find 59 detailed hike descriptions covering hundreds of miles of trails and canyoneering routes in this vast region. Included are Grand Staircase-Escalante, Cedar Mesa and Grand Gulch, Dark Canyon, Natural Bridges and the Paria Canyon-Vermilion Cliffs Wilderness. Provides detailed maps and tips on desert safety, coping with heat and dehydration, backcountry travel, driving remote desert roads, trailhead access and services.



### #1816 Best Easy Day Hikes Grandstaircase Escalante & Surrounding Areas \$6.95

The Glen Canyon region covers the prime hiking areas of Southern Utah, including Cedar Mesa and the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument. This guide will help you choose the best day hiking trails in these outstanding natural areas. Includes short descriptions and maps of the author's favorite easy day hikes in Cedar Mesa, Paria Canyon, Grand Staircase and Escalante Canyons.



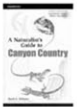
### #3289 Comb Ridge and Its People, \$29.95

Whether viewed as barrier wall or sheltering sanctuary, Comb Ridge has helped define life and culture in this region for thousands of years. Comb Ridge was the homeland for the Ancient Puebloan people and had similar spiritual and cultural significance to Utes, Paiutes and Navajo peoples. It also played a crucial role in the history of European American Settlement.



### #3184 Sacred Images: A Vision of Native American Rock Art, \$19.95

Master photographers Craig Law, John Telford, Tom Till, and Philip Hyde reveal prehistoric and historic rock art images as they stand on boulders, cliff faces, and overhangs throughout Utah. The wonderful text by Leslie Kelen, David Sucec and an introduction by N. Scott Momaday give insight to cultural styles and history.



### #1783 Naturalist Guide to Canyon Country, \$22.95

A comprehensive trailside reference to the plants, animals and geology of SE Utah and adjacent areas. An excellent companion for anyone interested in natural history, this guide provides easy identification of over 250 species. Sidebars highlight various aspects of canyon country natural history. Maps, color & b/w illustrations.

**CNHA** is a not for profit organization established to assist the educational and scientific efforts of the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), National Park Service (NPS) and U.S. Forest Service (USFS) in the Four Corners region. Our goal is to enhance each visitor's appreciation of public lands by providing quality educational material, both free and for sale, in our outlets in park visitor centers, other agency contact stations, and through our on-line catalog. **Your Purchases Support the Grand Gulch Primitive Area!**

Our primary source of income is the sale of educational materials. All sales items must pass a rigorous review process managed by CNHA and our agency partners. The funds we donate support agency programs in various ways, including seminars, outdoor educational programs, equipment and supplies for ranger / naturalists, exhibits, new facilities, and funding for research.



### #3421 The Cliff Dwellings Speak, \$24.95

This comprehensive guidebook to the cliff dwellings of the American Southwest will enhance and inform your exploration of America's marvelous cliff dwellings. The black and white photos throughout the book do a great job of illustrating what you may see and what to look for as you discover these ancient places.



### #3177 House of Rain, \$14.99

Craig Childs draws on a lifetime of adventure and exploration in the most forbidding landscapes of the Southwest, to frame the question of what brought about the rapid collapse of the Anasazi civilization in a whole new light. House of Rain is a feat of historical detection, an enthralling revisionist portrait of American prehistory, a new landmark work in the literature of ancient Native American culture.



### #1934 Anasazi America, \$24.95

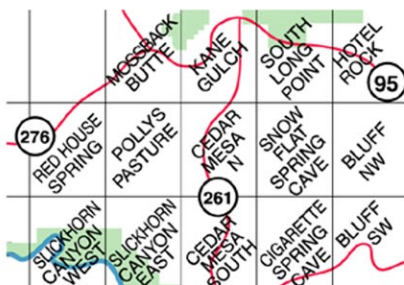
At the height of their power in the late eleventh century, the Chaco Anasazi dominated a territory in the American Southwest larger than any European principality of the time. Why did such a great society collapse? Who survived? Why? In this lively book anthropologist/archaeologist David Stuart presents answers to these questions that offer useful lessons to modern societies.



### #2349 Cedar Mesa Lapel Pin, \$4.95

## Area Maps

### USGS 7.5 Minute Maps \$8.00 each



### #677 National Geographic Grand Gulch Map. \$11.95

Coverage includes BLM/San Juan Resource Area; Cedar Mesa and the Grand Gulch Primitive Area; Northern Glen Canyon National Recreation Area, Valley of the Gods, Comb Ridge; Fish and Owl Creek. Includes UTM tick marks for use with your GPS unit.



### #680 BLM Grand Gulch Map \$2.95

This is a great map produced in conjunction with the BLM. It pinpoints selected archeological sites including various pictograph and petroglyph panels. It discusses cultural and natural history as well as provides minimum impact and outdoor safety tips.



### #681 National Geographic Manti-La Sal Map. \$11.95

Outdoor Recreation map for the La Sal Mountains, Dark Canyon Wilderness Area, Natural Bridges National Monument, the Abajo Mountains and Abajo Peak are featured. Bicentennial & Trail of the Ancients Scenic Byways.

**For a complete line of CNHA products visit: [www.cnha.org](http://www.cnha.org)**